

## **Aviation Planning Council**

### **Washington Long-Term Air Transportation Study (LATS), Phase III**

#### **Project Summary & Work Program Elements**

In early November of 2007, the Governor appointed ten-member Aviation Planning Council held their first meeting to review project objectives and chart a course for providing recommendations on how best to address future air transportation needs in the state. The next Aviation Planning Council is scheduled for February 7, 2008 and will be held at the Museum of Flight at Boeing Field in Seattle. The Council is scheduled to hold six workshops and four meetings during the course of the project with final recommendations to the Governor by July 1, 2009. Meetings and workshops will be held in differing geographical regions around the state to ensure statewide participation in the process.

Project information will be available on the WSDOT Aviation website at [HYPERLINK "http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/aviation/lats/" www.wsdot.wa.gov/aviation/lats/](http://www.wsdot.wa.gov/aviation/lats/).

#### **Background**

In 2005, the Governor signed into law Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill (ESSB) 5121, which authorizes a long-term air transportation planning study for general aviation and commercial airports state-wide. However, the primary focus of the study will be on commercial aviation as well as the four-regions identified in the legislation, which includes Tri-cities, Spokane, Puget Sound and southwest Washington. The legislation is also known as the Washington State Long-Term Air Transportation Study (LATS). The purpose of LATS is to understand what capacity currently exists in aviation facilities and what will be needed to meet future demand for air transportation. The study also included a review, and evaluation of air cargo and of high speed passenger transportation.

LATS will study existing conditions, system dynamics, performance, trends and market factors within the Washington State System of Airports. The process will identify how the system meets current demand and what is needed to meet future air transportation demands regionally and state-wide. The study recommendations and findings will be integrated into the Washington Transportation Plan (WTP), the Federal Aviation Administration (FAA) National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems (NPIAS), and regional and local transportation plans. The study will also assist in aligning federal, state, and regional objectives and priorities and help clarify airport sponsor objectives.

This study will be performed consistent with ESSB 5121 and Federal Aviation Regulations (FAR) Advisory Circular (AC) 150/5070-7 "The Airport System Planning Process". The

consultant team will work together in a team effort to develop a statewide aviation system plan and airport capital improvement program framework to address air transportation over the next twenty five years.

#### Aviation Planning Council

During Phase III, a ten member Governor's Aviation Planning Council will be convened to develop recommendations regarding specific policies and strategies to meet statewide commercial and general aviation needs. The policies and strategies will be based on the assessment and analysis completed during Phases I and II of the Long-Term Air Transportation Study (LATS). In order for the Council to fulfill this mandate, they will have to be well informed as to both the nature of the specific issues and the implications of alternative strategies that might be pursued in order to address these issues. It is the responsibility of the consultant team and WSDOT to provide the foundation and administrative support for the Council to develop well reasoned recommendations that reflect an understanding of the underlying issues, the advantages and disadvantages of alternative policies and actions, and an appreciation of the respective positions of Washington residents, businesses, and aviation stakeholders as they pertain to specific system challenges.

### **Project Objectives**

How best to meet commercial and general aviation capacity needs;

Which regions of the state are in need of improvement regarding the matching of existing, or projected, airport facilities and the long-range capacity needs at airports within the region expected to reach capacity before 2030;

Recommendations regarding the placement of future commercial or general aviation facilities to meet the need for improved aviation planning in the region; and

Include public input in the making of the final recommendations.

### **Proposed Work Plan Elements**

A. Supporting Research Needs: During the course of the Phase I and II process additional research needs were identified by the Aviation Technical Committee to support the Aviation Planning Council process. These studies included the following:

*Policy Support and Review.*– The primary purpose of this task will be to review existing statewide air transportation policies together with the Washington Transportation Plan regional transportation plans and national policies to assist the council in their deliberation on how best to meet the states long-term multimodal transportation needs.

*Assessment of Military Airfields* – Consistent with this FAA requirement, this task will include an assessment of military airfields in Washington State to determine if military airfields will be available to address aviation capacity demand over the planning period. This task will support FAA Order 5090.3C Field Formulation of the National Plan of Integrated Airport Systems.

*Products and deliverables: Summary research reports and identification of key issues to support the Council's decision process.*

**B. Aviation Planning Council & Support:** The Council will meet over a fourteen to sixteen month period. It is anticipated that there will be a total of six council workshops and 4 council meetings. Key Issues before the Council will include developing broad based policy recommendations to support the State's interests in air transportation, selecting a recommended preferred alternative(s) and developing funding recommendations for implementing the plan. According to ESSB 5121, the Council is required to:

Determine "how best to meet the statewide commercial and general aviation capacity needs";

Determine "which regions of the state are in need of improvement regarding the matching of existing, or projected, airport facilities, and the long-range capacity needs at airports within the region expected to reach capacity before the year 2030; and

Make recommendations regarding the placement of future commercial and general aviation airport facilities designed to meet the need for improved aviation planning in the region; and

Include public input in the making of the final recommendations.

*Products and deliverables: Council presentation and briefing materials, identification of statewide aviation policies, identification of system plan alternatives and Council Report to the Governor of recommended actions.*

**C. Public Participation & Outreach:** The State of Washington is committed to the development of an airport system plan that reflects input and perspective from aviation stakeholders, government officials, and the general public. In order to accomplish this objective, processes must be in place to communicate project objectives, allow stakeholder input and inform the public on key project issues and findings. This work element will include:

*Briefings with Key Stakeholders* – WSDOT will provide briefings of the LATS process and key findings of the project to airports, civic organizations and governmental agencies upon request. Meeting dates and presentation material will be provided on the website.

*Electronic Town Hall Meetings* – Two Electronic Town Hall meetings will be held on-line, via a moderated session with 150 participants each, who would be recruited from Knowledge Network's panel sample. Participants will represent a statistical representation of the state demographics. The meetings will be timed to support the deliberations of the Aviation Planning Council during key milestones in the process.

*Regional Meetings* – A total of four public meetings will be held across the state to gather public input on key issues, recommended policies, implementation strategies and findings of the Council. Meeting would be held during the mid-point and final stages of the process. Public comments will be incorporated into the final aviation system plan and implementation recommendations.

*E-News Briefings* – E-News Briefings of the project will be distributed by WSDOT through the Aviation List Serve during key milestones of the study to announce opportunities for public input, and to inform the public about study findings during periodic points in the study.

*Media Releases* – Media releases and announcements will be developed to make known dates on public workshops, meetings, key study findings and other study related information.

*Website* – The Aviation Division’s website will feature a special section dedicated to LATS with two primary purposes: a) provide information about the status of LATS, including media releases, meeting dates, technical and support information, relevant publications and meeting minutes. b) Solicit input and comments from the public.

*Products and deliverables: Communication and Public Participation Plan, presentation materials, electronic newsletters, media releases, identification of key issues and public input on statewide policies and final plan recommendations.*

D. Air Transportation Alternatives Analysis – The purpose of this task will be to develop proposed alternatives to address recommended actions by the council to meet statewide needs up to 2030. Recommended alternatives will be based on ESSB 5121, airport classification strategies and performance measures, WSDOT transportation policies and federal policies and guidelines. Recommendations will include generalized cost estimates and the financial feasibility of proposed alternatives. The alternatives should consider statewide and regional short term, mid term and long-term (25-year) planning periods for commercial aviation, general aviation, air cargo, and schedule passenger service.

*Product and deliverables: Technical report on the approach and methodology used to develop system plan alternatives, funding issues and Council recommendations.*

E. Statewide Aviation Capital Improvement Program – A critical element of the third phase of the study will be to develop program funding implementation solutions. This task will identify procedures and analytical tools to develop a statewide implementation framework and guidance materials to implement a multi-year Statewide Airport Capital Improvement Program (ACIP). The guidance document will be designed to implement airport improvement priorities to support statewide and regional airport development projects that support the overall aviation system. Federal and state criteria and performance objectives will be used to evaluate projects based on local project priorities from airport facility plans and federal and statewide interests. The final product will be an ACIP implementation plan and procedural framework for WSDOT and FAA project programming. This element will be conducted in close coordination with the FAA.

*Product and deliverables: Technical report on the approach used to evaluate other statewide programming solutions, development of an ACIP procedural guidance manual, and identification of tools for implementation.*

F. Legislative Package Proposal – Developing a legislative package is a crucial element in the implementation of the air transportation plan. The package may include development of alternative funding sources and proposed amendments to legislation to improve the functionality of the statewide air transportation system.

*Products and deliverables: Technical report on the existing and proposed aviation funding sources and recommended legislation issues.*

G. Draft and Final Air Transportation System Plan Document – This task includes preparation of draft and final Aviation System Plan which will include an overview of the statewide aviation system, aviation trends and forecasts, airport classification and

performance measures, aviation policies, procedural strategy and recommended council actions to the Governor.

*Products and deliverables: Aviation System Plan, ACIP procedural guidance manual, and Council report recommendations.*

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